

St. Andrews College Press

gravity hill

Gravity Hill *magazine*

Kimberly Elizabeth Neal, Editor

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COVER ART:
"Crimson Fall"
by Sharon Patton

TO MARIE GILBERT



Marie Gilbert. Gracious, generous, kind, extraordinarily insightful. One could go on searching out terms in an attempt to do justice in paying homage to Marie and her memory.

She was, in the words of George Bruce, “a great encourager.” Marie was a fine poet and peerless friend. She encouraged people to appreciate one another. She encouraged writers of all ages and persuasions. By example she taught us to analyze and to empathize. By being a great learner, she taught us by example never to cease from exploration.

Twice the head of the North Carolina Poetry Society, she worked in its ranks for decades and was the originator of the annual Gilbert-Chappell poetry competition. A constant student herself, Marie was a ceaseless champion of learning and of St. Andrews Presbyterian College, on whose Board of Trustees she was an inspiring member. It was my privilege to count her as a friend for nearly four decades.

When her devoted husband, Dick, was called to serve in both World War II and the Korean War, Marie held the fort at home in the tough role of single mom—again the great encourager of two wonderful (and successful) children as well as her husband, fighting in the field in the grimmest of circumstances.

Marie's hope for the future of humankind never dimmed, nor did her belief in the power of the written and spoken word as useful tools to great ends. Upon her death the outpouring of sadness was a torrent deeply felt by present and past students of all ages and circumstances whom she had nurtured over the years. Typical of the many dozens that came my way, I must pass along two: a student of several years ago said, "She always left me feeling better about being alive and about being a writer." And the words of a colleague: "She always asked me how my writing was coming along—even if she was the celebratory reader of the night."

Marie received both the Sam Ragan Award for contributions to the Fine Arts of North Carolina and the Fortner Writer and Community Award from St. Andrews. She was a constant supporter of *Cairn: The St. Andrews Review*. She was always a pixie of humor, whether performing "Walking to Conway" or dressing up as Uncle Sam on the occasion of St. Andrews' Press' 25th birthday (and singing a

celebratory song).

Marie authored numerous books of poetry to high acclaim. It is impossible to do her memory justice. Let me offer, in closing, one of her poems attesting to her respect and affection for learning and for St. Andrews College.

Ron Bayes

Marie Gilbert

CAMPUS OFF SEASON

Quiet dignity, the bell tower offers its Celtic cross
up to the blue depth, and down to the still lake
water lilies lie listless in shallows.

Strangely quiet ducks and geese
leave spreading wakes.
We breathe the silence.

In the heat, waiting for students
the clean graffiti wall stands
blank stone.

Students will return with crumbs for the water fowl
and a summer's worth of questions.
Professors will return, stir new thoughts.

For now, breathe silent anticipation.

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* Faculty, Staff

~ Alumni

° Community

I am proud to present the Fourth Edition of *Gravity Hill*. Though the magazines from the St. Andrews Press have changed over the years, the goal to produce and inspire art has not. *Gravity Hill* is a student-edited journal designed to display aspiring artists alongside accomplished ones. The campus and community brought together by St. Andrews is a remarkable one that *Gravity Hill* brings to people unfamiliar with us; to those who know us perhaps it will summon good memories. Part of what makes St. Andrews possible is the society we live in and are a part of. Influenced by the world and the people we interact with, submissions are taken from students, alumni, faculty, staff, and people from the general community. This magazine and this school would not be possible without the support of everyone connected with the school or the Press and for that I would like to thank you, even though these words seem too inadequate to express my sincere feelings of gratitude.

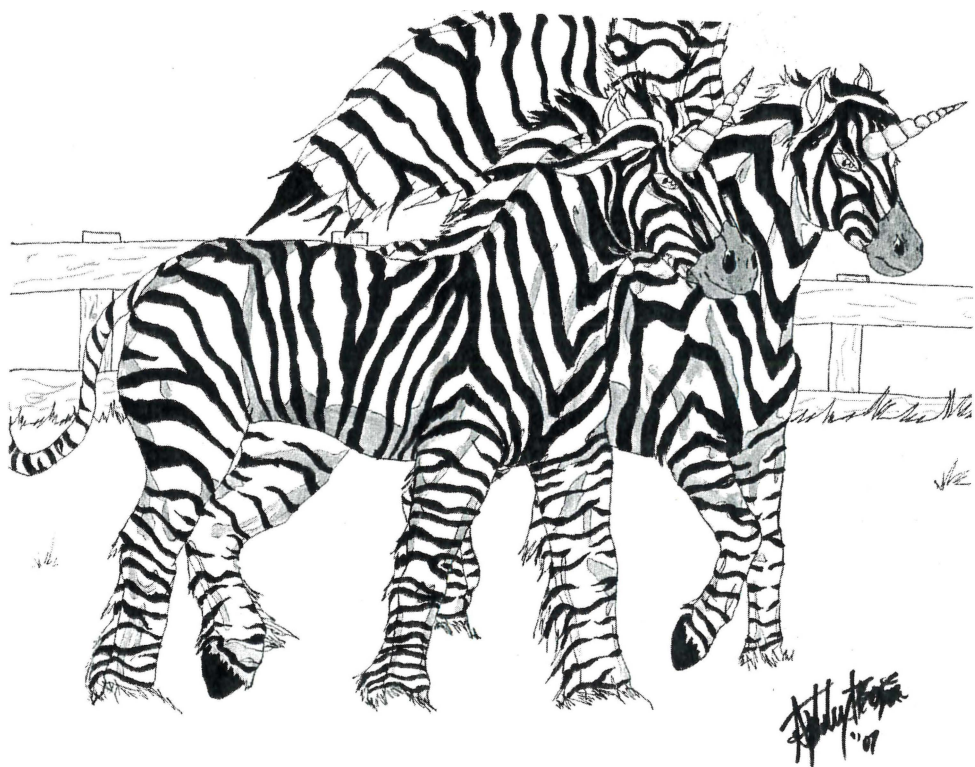
I would like to send a special thank you to everyone at St. Andrews for making this edition possible but especially to: Ron Bayes, David J. Bell, Caitlin Johnson, Edna Ann Loftus, Molly McCaffrey, and Margaret Mason Tate. Without them and the environment of St. Andrews, *Gravity Hill* would not be possible.

Kimberly Elizabeth Neal
EDITOR

Ryan Thompson

MUSE

muse, you tease me
you give me only a taste
of what could be
if only I could bind you
then you would see



Zebra Dreams
ASHLEY BISSON

John Williamson

PAMELA

Before the white city
you stood in chains,
a tattoo round your arm
like the thorns round Christ's head
and swirling above you
thousands of white birds
whose freedom went unenvied,
unnoticed in your glad bound eyes.

16 You sank to your knees and coughed,
the blood thick and dark,
splattering in a white kerchief
you clutched in one manacled hand.

Here in this new place
the desire you had is gone,
whirling off in your fever
and the irises in your babies' eyes.

You came to this place for lust,
for the new in everything,
and you won't be back.

Jacob Anderson

DESPAIR

In the darkness shadowed dreams pass by
The cry of the wolf echoes off canyon walls
Dragons long forgotten
fade with the newborn sun
Wedding vows turn to ash
before leaving lovers' mouths
Broken worlds crumble in God's hands

FEAR THE REAPER

Silence is my fortitude
Stillness is my frame
Calmness is my poise
Death is my name

17

PROPHECY I

In a world that doesn't exist
the dead roam the streets,
unaware that their time has ended.
The dark angel descends,
ending the twilight days
Then chaos consumes the soulless,
the never-born cross the seas
The ancient ones will leave the city of war
and return never more.
In deeds the silent will shout
Black rain leads to red tears,
forging the promised land of the seers.

Jackie Dove-Miller

I BELIEVE IN BUTTERFLIES

The broken sun catcher lay underneath several yellowing product manuals, packs of plastic take-out utensils, and an assortment of odd shaped do-dads that I could not even identify a use for. Though I'd opened that junk drawer hundreds of times over the years, I hadn't noticed the sun catcher until I was looking for some interesting item to use for a writing assignment.

18 I had purchased the rust-colored sun catcher in 1994 when I first moved here. Lovingly I had hung it in my kitchen window, though catching the sun was not why I purchased it. What I wanted was to continuously see the large butterfly whose permanent residence was the very heart of the fragile glass ornament. He was painted multiple shades of brown with blue, yellow and red markings shaped like eyes lining the edges of his wings. Identical white stripes adorned the upper parts of both wings, and orange outlined the entire creature. He was superimposed onto a bed of green leaves. The butterfly was not pretty, but I loved seeing it. It reminded me both of the person I used to be and the person I had grown into by then.

During my growing period, I had chosen the butterfly as my talisman because of its movement from life to death, then to life again. Like the mythological phoenix rising from its own ashes, the ordinary, almost ugly caterpillar wraps itself inside its cocoon and seems to live no more. But in time, a miraculous butterfly emerges. In 1980, as a twenty-nine year old divorcee, I had been like that caterpillar. Rejection had forced me

inside my own cocoon. And there I lay, incubating until I could come forth, beautiful and whole. Seeing the sun illuminate the butterfly touched the very fiber of my being, reminding me that I was on the other side of the worst pain I would endure.

Finding the sun catcher again reaffirmed my belief in the butterfly, its magical transition from a lowly crawling creature, to wondrous beauty in flight. It reminded me that humans have the same butterfly-like resiliency, the ability to undergo the same death-to-life metamorphosis and then take wing. Like the caterpillar in chrysalis, we need that time away from our normal, complicated lives, a time of solitude and reflection. A time of cocoon-like silence so that we can hear the voice of God call forth our butterfly-selves.

At some point, the suction device broke off the butterfly sun catcher, and I had to put it aside. But I could not bear to throw it away. Instead, I put it in my junk drawer and eventually forgot about it. Pulling the sun catcher out today transported me back to the period when I first knew who I was and valued my personhood. The memory warmed my heart and made me proud that I have learned to carry the sun in my soul and release its sparkle in tiny flashes an essay here, a song there, a sincere hello — all evidence that I, like every human, am a butterfly-miracle.



Iron and Eiffel Tower

TASHA MEHNE

Galina Podolsky

A HEART'S TRUE HOME

My love, I want to tell you a story about a beautiful girl,
who was a maiden of the sea, and God's own handmade pearl.

When life was hard she'd run to the seashore across
the open land,

where she'd close her eyes, open her heart, and let the tears
pour out on sand.

She was alone until a day when she met her unblemished man,
and when he stole her heart and mind, a new chapter
in her life began.

She brought him to the ocean-side, the only location where
she had found her one true home, someplace she felt
no despair.

They sat on the seashore together 'til her faithful lad fell
asleep,

as she struggled with questions about him, the sea gave
her answers to keep.

She lifted her beauteous head and looked up at the sky.

So many times she'd done that, so many times asking "Why?"

The stars lit up her face and eyes; she was an angel not a human.

As she lay there swept in sand, she knew she was now a woman.

She'd come to know the stars as God's unfailing eyes.

As she hummed to the ocean's beat, she remembered
her good-byes.

But this time happiness took over, and as she looked
down at the waves,

she realized that they did more than sweep away old graves.

Her seaside home had always felt as a sanctuary to her,

and like the fashioned sand-dune peak that God's
gentle hand would stir,

the deep blue waters cured her pain on every faithful day,
as the frisky sea-salt smelling breeze brushed her hair
down by the bay.

With all these thoughts she fell asleep with her
true love close by,
as gulls flew off into horizon, abyss of the sea
and the sky...

The peaceful splash of breaking waves, the
velvet-feeling breeze,
the ever-changing sand at her feet, she smiled
and sighed with ease.

She'd found her heart's longing and shook
away the fears.

the zephyr picked up magically and dried up
her shed tears.

She looked down at her lover while the waves softly
kissed their feet,

As she lay there in his arms feeling the early sun's heat.

They say home is where the heart is. She'd known
it to be true.

Her heart was now and always would be, right with
her lover... you

John Williamson

NOCTURNE

Your eyes fall on me,
and their darkness
is the answer to something
I asked myself
long ago.

When you were a little girl
and in your hand
was a black toy pony
with a white saddle,
you brushed its mane
with your little dark fingers
and whispered in singsong
over and over again
of your love,
your love,
your love.

The purity of it made me cry!
And now when your eyes fall on me
I give up my fear
and its comfort.

The chasm that opens beneath me
is your love,
that black envelope of
your body pressing against me,
your eyes aglow
in the darkness

like the eyes
of a thousand gods.
And I feel your fingers
in my hair
as you sing.



Carriage Horse
BRITTANY PARRISH

Danny Matthews

AMERICAN HAIKU

Every thing has an end,
why is death so hard to swallow?
Stall tactic.

Emily Threlkeld

HOLDING PATTERN

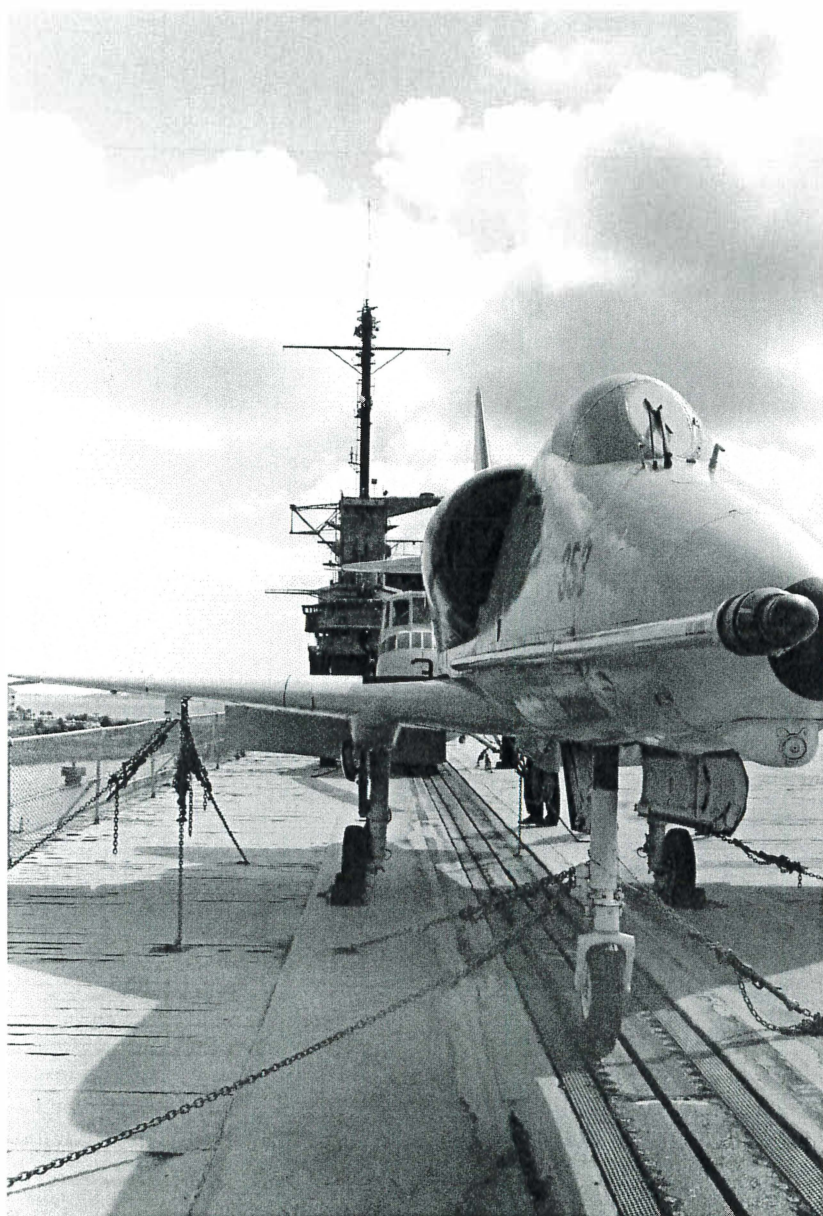
Four hours on a plane for a one-hour flight.
I leave the airport and can't find my usual taxi driver.
He looks like what you'd expect,
and he's nowhere to be found.

I ask the other drivers about him.
"Oh, you're the college girl," someone says,
and I find that strange,
that I should exist without knowing it
in a world of cigarette butts and waiting.
"He'll be here in a minute."

I sit on my suitcase, a passenger waiting for a driver
amid drivers waiting for passengers,
I listen to stories about unpaid fares,
listen to a driver tempt
a skeptical man with enough family and luggage
to fill the beat-up cab twice.
"We can work magic," he says.
I almost believe him.

A soldier, on his way to Fort Bragg smokes a cigarette.
He watches me as he does so,
and I watch him watch me,
and he watches me watch him watch me,
Until it becomes unclear who's watching who,
and he throws his cigarette on the ground
and gets into a cab.

27



Aircraft Carrier
BRITTANY PARRISH

Jacob Anderson

THE WANDERER

Weary is the wanderer,
for he knows naught of hearth and home,
but instead travels down dead and dusty roads,
forgotten, bitter and forlorn.

His pace is steady.
Eyes that shine with sadness
stare out at a world of rejection.

The madness lurks inside his mind.
Alone in a void of his own choosing.
So cold,
frozen heart and iron fist,
harvester of sorrow

29

Abandon false hope.
A world without sin.
He drifts amongst the shadows.
Death awaits him,
still he traverses the path,
staff in hand.

Margaret Mason Tate

FOR DANNY

23 April 2007

the night you
were found, we
gathered
in the middle,
propping
up each other, holding
hard, cheeks shiny
and cool in the
night
air

30 we could not see the moon.

we listened as a
lone
piper played
the soundtrack
to your last
walk
across the bridge.

in the morning, we read
poems as prayers,
singing the
body
electric and
longing
to see yours
walk through the door.

Parrish Ravelli

FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE

Right now I am writing a story
about a young man

in his mid-twenties
looking for the right words to say.

This part of the story is called
'Faith.' It is when

my fears dance between
my self-proclaimed innocence,

making day-to-day events
seem like undisclosed chapters.

There are lines and roads
as there is walking

and there is traveling.
I want to stop to notice

life's fulfilling glances
so that at whatever gates

I find myself,
towards the end of this story,

I will at least have something to remember.
Like the shape clouds take

just before it rains.
The way you make crying

look beautiful.
Right now I am a young man

in his mid-twenties
walking lines

and traveling roads,
looking for the words to say.

Ryan Thompson

NEEDING

Waiting for me to die,
waiting for the needful one to go away.
Needing so much more than I,
no wonder you look astray.
I look for silence or a loving moan.
Lost in deep despair
you only sit and stare.
There once was hope for me,
Still glimmering somewhere.
But I have fallen beneath your will to reach.

Jackie Dove-Miller

PEPSI, PLEASE

"I wan' Pep-Co! I wan' Pep-Co!" demanded the thick, child-like voice. The voice seemed detached from its owner because a ceiling-high shelf separated me, the overly-sheltered, twenty-year old, college sophomore, from all other life in Leonard Cottage. Two weeks ago, I had been assigned to the library where I basked in the solitude of books. Surrounded by pages stuffed with worldly wisdom, I saw the placement as a perfect match. I had worked silently and alone.

34 Before being assigned here as a way to pay for my college tuition, I had never seen a retarded person. I had never given a thought to what they were like, how they lived, what went on in their brains or hearts. This day, I was an intruder in the midst of their domain.

Shell-shocked at being transferred, after only two weeks, to the chaotic hubbub of a cottage, I had sequestered myself in the cave-like laundry nook away from the retarded adults who made their homes on the campus of Caswell Training School.

Two minutes earlier, I had been instructed on how the laundry should be put away. No introductions. No tour. Just, "Welcome to Leonard. Let's start you to sorting laundry." I couldn't even remember the lady's name who showed me my new job, then disappeared. Let's see... towels to the right; sheets and pillow-cases up top; dresses on the lower shelves. I had gotten into a rhythm, almost oblivious to all that was happening outside my "cave." But not quite. Every once in a while, a

disembodied voice would screech something unintelligible, making my stomach flip-flop. With each squeal, I'd listen in frozen wonder for a second, then return to my mundane chore, desperate to shut out the remainder of the drama of which the outburst was a part. That is, until the owner of the voice, now growling out of a slightly twisted mouth moved into the opening of my dimly lit haven. Her lips, all but dripping saliva, were so large that they didn't seem to belong to her face. Though she didn't look like she was capable of thought, she seemed driven.

Margaret, whose name I learned later, might have been five feet tall and a quarter of that size in width. Her very round, but flat-featured face appeared both vacant and determined. She flailed her bulbous hands in uncoordinated gestures, tugging momentarily through stringy blonde hair as she half grunted, half shouted in my direction: "I wan' Pep-Co." Because she now stood with one foot all but inside the laundry nook, I interrupted my rhythm and stared, dumbfounded.

Oh, shit, I thought. *Is she crazy? Surely she won't come in here!* I'd call this wishful thinking since something inside me knew she would do exactly that. I could not move. Plus, there was nowhere to go even if I could. Margaret stood at the only opening of my former haven. And she wanted me out.

Since I had no intention of exiting, I was not responding as Margaret wished. For emphasis, she moved into the nook and flailed her arms again. "I wan Pep-Co," she cried, all but insisting that I move in the direction of the "Pep-Co," which, by the way, I had not yet figured out the meaning of. While I stood staring,

trying to determine what she wanted, why she was coming at me, and what I should do if she actually attacked, Margaret's arms started whirling like the front propeller of a small-engine airplane. And that plane was headed toward my face.

"I wan' Pep-Co! I wan' Pep-Co," her monotone droned on. I knew that no other cottage worker was around to accommodate Margaret's demand because the other female, Mrs. Whitfield, had stepped out for a moment, locking the cottage door behind her, leaving me alone to put up the drab, over-washed laundry of women who did not know me. I also knew I wasn't the one who could help Margaret since I had a total of five minutes worth of experience at cottage life and could barely find my way out of the laundry nook. So I stood there, staring blankly at her as she made the decision to land her flailing hands somewhere on me.

36

Perhaps it was unintentional that one of her hands landed in my mouth, but the fact that the other one ended up there also suggests otherwise. In her attempt to force me to acknowledge her request, Margaret grabbed my face by forcing the three middle fingers of her left hand into my mouth, digging into the soft tissue of my inner jaw. The right thumb was on the other side of my tongue, and its four clammy siblings gripped the outside of that same jaw. Though I grabbed her wrists in an effort to free myself, my face felt as though it were in a vice. Jumbled and unanswerable questions whirled through my brain: *What does she want? How do I get her off of me? How forceful am I allowed to be? Where the hell is someone who can save me?*

Finally, while Margaret and I danced our obscene waltz out of the mouth of the laundry nook,

another resident yelled, "She wants a Pepsi Cola. Give her a Pepsi Cola," as though I had a Pepsi dispenser in my possession. At that moment, Mrs. Whitfield rushed through the door. Knowing that yelling at Margaret would only agitate her more, Mrs. Whitfield all but leaped upon us, grabbing Margaret's arms near her wrists. Determined not to let go of me, her Pep-Co agent, Margaret tightened her grip on my face and mouth. Her thick, clammy thumb jammed deeper into my gum and her nubby fingers pulled on my jaw as though she thought it were made of elastic. Her former demands had turned completely into grunts now, and the previously clumsy two-person waltz turned momentarily into a threesome.

"Margaret," cooed Mrs. Whitfield, "let the nice lady go. She doesn't have any Pepsi Cola. I'll get one for you. Come on, now; let go." All the while Mrs. Whitfield spoke, she was prying Margaret loose, one finger at a time. When the last finger slipped away, I floated zombie-like to the door, opened it, and calmly walked out, letting it slam with an echoing clank behind me. Breathing the hall air made me conscious of how sour the odor was inside the cottage, and I felt the contents of my stomach surge. I sucked in air to calm myself, but that caused that part of the room whose air I swallowed to tilt slightly. I leaned against the door to steady myself and knew I had to leave. I didn't tell anyone where I was going. As a matter of fact, I did not utter a sound. I just walked over to the administration office and sat down.

The thunderstorm on my face was enough to signal the secretary to get Mr. Lawson, the supervisor over student workers. He followed her to the outer

office where I sat sphinx-like and offered concern.
“Jackie, is something wrong? Come into my office.”

Still feeling the thickness of Margaret’s fingers clinging to the inner walls of my mouth, I could not release the words behind the upcoming storm. Silence. Mr. Lawson sat back behind his desk, never taking his eyes off me. Again he spoke, “Jackie, is something wrong? You couldn’t have been in the cottage more than fifteen minutes. Did something happen?” Silence again. Suddenly, the clouds broke, and tears washed the stubby-fingered shadows free.

“I can’t go back,” I whispered raising my flooding eyes from the floor to meet his.

“What happened?” he asked for the third time.

38 Tears flowed unrestrained, and again, words would not come. How could I tell him that though Margaret’s “attack” had scared me, she was not the reason why I could not return to Leonard or any other cottage. To say that, I would have to admit that I was petrified of being locked in a cottage with fifteen retarded adult females. Me... afraid. Afraid of women, just like me. Like me except retarded... lacking in complex thinking skills. Just hearing myself think that made me burn with embarrassment. The ladies were retarded, not dangerous, and yet, the need to be away from them over powered me. Who was I in relation to these beings, human, though not functioning as we who call ourselves “normal” do? What craving inside would urge me to attack another for the burning fizz of a Pepsi Cola, the wet-hot kiss of a handsome man, or to save a child from some stranger in the dark? How far removed was I from functioning less than humanly or inhumanely? That’s what the “Margarets” of Leonard

Cottage would force me to ask

Again, I whispered, "I can't go back," then
retreated to the safe malignancy of silence.



Kitten
HEATHER BRETT

Andrew Reynolds

FOR MARY DE RACHEWILTZ

and there the thing stands, wind-whipped,

and leaves no other direction to go
but in,

as vortex,
as gyre was,
as journey
unto death.

and then went down
to test the water
to see if it was godly.

41

and we took rest and waited,
in our small tent, and waited,
and Arachne danced, and we waited,
and the stones all that while whispering
about the beach. and we waited.
and chopped wood. and carried water.

and a vessel came on the eighth day, empty,
belly-up, washed up on the beach,
and we took it, and made it fit for moving.

but mutiny plagued us from the outset,
and we could not board it but for murder
and sabotage on the beach.

and the winds soon came
and it was storm season
and the boat again was wreckage.

the darkness, grown longer for that time of year,
caused each to retreat to his bells
and it was clear there would be music again...

Molly McCaffrey

FOR MARIE GILBERT

You came every week
in your tailored jackets and mini heels,
looking as put together
as Jackie O greeting a dignitary.
You asked about my work each time,
always interested, always supportive.
And if I ever missed you,
overlooked your sparkling eyes,
you'd seek me out,
eager to extend a Southern welcome.
"Why, hello there," you'd say,
and I'd wonder if I would ever be as refined as you.

43

Ron Bayes

THE BEST WINTER

Snow
coming.

The lace.

Your face.

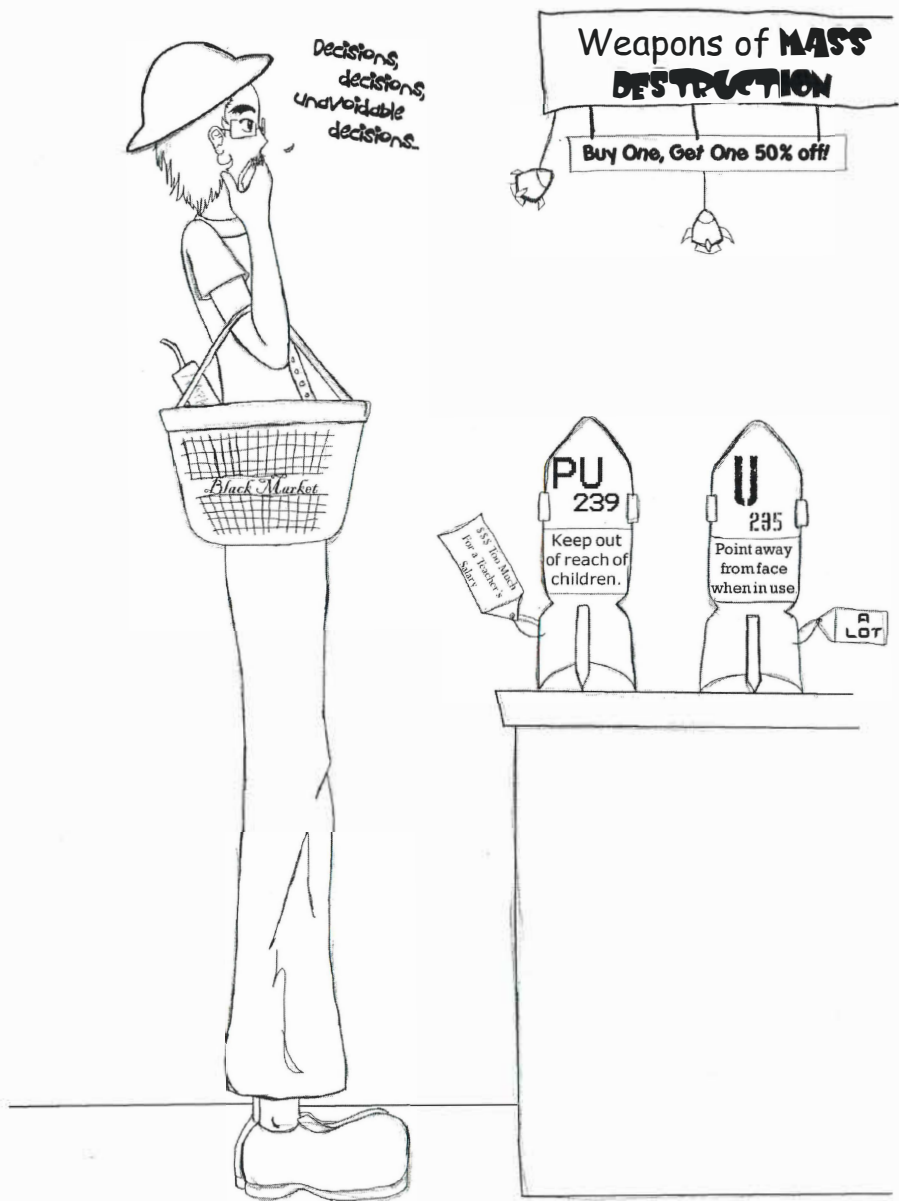
Gregory Gray

ROTTEN FRUIT

A boy of ten,
Louisiana seemed to sparkle.
Heading from the cotton fields into forest.
The sun beat down on my stained shirt.
That day trumpeted change, and
 I took an unused path
 to appease it.

Blossoms showed the way.
Up ahead a knotted tree
bore thin fibers upon a gnarled finger.
Cotton-white amid green of grass.

45



Shopping Choices

ALEXIS BAKER

Jean Jones

ADVICE

Religion always asks the same question:

"What is the nature of the sacrifice?"

Religion always asks, "Who or what is the sacrifice?

You? God? What do you need to give up?

Die to self."

In contrast to that is experience.

That is why the devil is evil. He has lived which is
devil spelled

backwards. Experience

shows life is a roller coaster ride

not unlike the description of the afterlife

given in the *Bardo Thodal*, or Tibetan

Book of the Dead.

47

If, as the Buddhists claim,

life itself is nothing but a series of images,

sensations, smells, emotions, and feelings,

and that life itself is nothing but a blur,

by all means, enjoy life!

Ask that girl or boy out you always wanted!

Don't worry about the "no," you might receive.

Worry about the regrets at the nursing home, which

I assure you will happen if you live long enough,

but I am not advocating that you die young and leave

a pretty corpse, instead, I

recommend

a life not filled with regret.

I know in my case I have attempted to go out with all
the girls I wanted to go out with, and although many
rejected me, and many laughed or cried about me,
some enjoyed being with me, and for me,
that would not have happened had I not asked.

Now obviously, vows mean something, and children
mean something, so I am not
advocating leaving the wife and kids to go out with
that pretty young
secretary,
but have you ever wanted to go somewhere?
Then by all means, Go!

48

Do not live a life filled with regret, but instead,
live a life in which what mattered to you
was what you pursued, and I assure you,
if you pursue or do what matters to you,
your life will not be filled with regret.

We were meant by our Creator to have joy.
Unadulterated joy, as our Creator is.

Your passions were and are your dreams.
Never take them lightly.
Those deep hurts from long ago
will still hurt years later.

Life truly is filled with passion,
but do not be blind to think that is all life is:
it is both passion and reflection, and much later,
the sting will hurt, but not so deeply.
What is life anyway, but emotions and
experiences, right?

And may all your experiences not be so
intense, so deep,
and so down. There is more to life than that.
It is time alone, to look up at the horizon, watch the
sun rise or set,
watch the clouds move, see the stars come out, all
reminders of something
bigger than you, and yet, since you are observing it,
you must be a part of it as well!

Neither give up nor be filled with regret.
It is both exciting and stimulating.
And isn't that what life is about?
Lived? The devil/lived?
Do not get too tired with life,
for as Joseph Campbell once stated,
"it is all about being and becoming."
It sure is.

Mary E.B. Smith

CAN YOU HEAR IT...?

The beat of drum
sounds echo deep.
So faint they be
they lull to sleep.
Yet vibrant and strong,
full of laughter and joy —
They make you leap
in dance.

I hear the drums
full of fury and woe.
And the questions of wail:
“Why is this so?
Doesn't equality apply to me?”
And hatred swells
when the answer is “no.”

I hear the sound
of a new born soul
with eyes of blue
and afraid nose.
His mirror lies,
but his heartbeat knows.
Dance.

I hear the pain
in a mother's cry
for a child who knew
but dared to try.

He walked before them —
Faith in hand
If not free then I will die.
Dance.

Oh, black woman's heart
who makes the song.
Like a willow bent,
but an oak tree strong.
You are the bridge
between mighty wrongs.
Dance.

Oh, foreign drums —
Never rest.
Keep beating, beating
in protest —
lest we forget
years of shame and distress
that stole our children's innocence.

Beat until the fires burn
and singe hatred
to a pile of dust.
Beat until the wisdom of Blackness
shines like gold.
Beat until my brother hears
that the sound of his drum
and my drum are one.
One...One.

I hear the beat
of distant drums.

They call to all,
but only some
will hear.

Listen... listen...
listen.

Until the spirit of peace falls upon the land.
Beat, oh drum
until all join
in Dance.



Taurus: April 21-May 21
ALEXIS BAKER

Joe C. Miller

THE FAUCET DRIPS

Paranoia is only real
if it is an illusion
insomnia and dyslexia
have me up all night
contemplating
the meaning of dog

and the faucet drips

Paper or plastic
no one really cares
so I talk to the hand
and a report is written
that ends up on
my permanent record

and the faucet drips

The birds are singing
the flowers bloom
I skip through meadows
while my money
is spent killing people
I will never know

and the faucet drips

Who was this Jesus
and why was he born?
to be a man of miracles
or was he the son of God
and tell me the truth
is he really coming back?

the faucet drips
and drips and drips...

Justin Thoby

DARKNESS: IN ACROSTIC VERSE

Draped in velvet black,
A curtain upon the world
Reigning lightless, eternal
Kaleidoscopic crystals
Near to heaven in their beauty
Ever present in the sky
Shine like wanton lanterns
Silver, against the backdrop of night

Dani Buchanan

REMAINS

For Alexandra Hartner

Tire marks scarred the moist ground.
Signs of the accident littered the area —
a door handle here, a rear view mirror there,
the barren earth exposed in patches.

Along the side of the road was a stain
left by the car's fluids.
Black, it smelled of oil, gas, and transmission fluid
and was set deep in the concrete.

There were also personal belongings:
a single tube of vanilla lip gloss
was lying on the side of the road, half empty.
The cap was silver,
the tube clear and dotted with sparkles.
Tiny scratches covered the surface,
dirt imbedded in them.
I picked it up when no one was looking,
something to help me remember you.

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New Year

EMILY THRELKELD

Gregory Gray

CHANGES II

A broken man, he simply yearned
To no longer be caged.
He remembers when the fires burned
And wishes they still raged.

Spring, the season where beauty reigned,
Ended long ago, its memory merely feigned.
The days of summer were never without heat;
Its scorching Bolero had that irresistible beat.

Riddled with changes without need,
Autumn was a strange season indeed.
There are many things ice does not allow.
He is in winter now.

The most saddening thing you'll see
Is a slowly dying flame.
Because then you'll know how things will be
And how your fate is the same.

Marty Silverthorne

BOJANGLES BISCUIT

Somebody ate a Bojangles biscuit
the morning my mama died
and charged it to her credit card.
Mama couldn't eat for weeks
and would have loved a BoBerry biscuit,
but December and death had crawled up,
shut her eyes down, stole that blue hope
we all had clung to. Some bastard somewhere
stole my mama's credit card
and licked icing off a BoBerry biscuit
the morning the mortician closed her eyes.

Marty Silverthorne

ROOM ABOVE THE LATE-NIGHT SHOW
VIDEO BOUTIQUE

She rented a room above the late-night show
Video Boutique
because it was cheap and she was working her way
through college
trying to study above the scream of porn videos
and freshmen
playing with nipple clamps. She found it hard to
sleep or study,
especially those nights when the whiskey-breath
owner knocked
on her door after closing, attempting to raise the
rent or bargain
for a young body to wallow with. She could stay
there only so long
before something would go wrong and one night
on the fire escape,
hurrying in from a late class, she did not see him
in the dark doorway.
He took what did not belong to him, and she
could not live
with the violation, found a razor and sawed her
life in two.

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Jackie Dove-Miller

THAT SOMETHING WITHIN

There is something within me
That is strong enough
To keep me from toppling
Over the edge of
Sanity,
Over the ledge of
Frustration
Or over the hedge of
All-out foolishness.
It leads me to prayer
When I would otherwise
Break.

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There is something in my make-up
Or my bringing up
Or just the way I look up
That straightens my back
And bows my head.
It becomes the focus of my meditation.
The sentiment in my supplication,
The reason for my transformation.
That thing inside me
Has me choosing light
Though darkness covers all.
It wells up like ocean waves
Come to drown those who
Think they deserve to push me back
Hold me down or
Steal my joy.

I have a spiritual strength that
Grows deeper and speaks louder as I get to know
More about who I am.

"Where did IT come from?" someone recently asked.
I answered, "In my developing stage, someone
Said out loud,

'You sure are good at _____
My puny soul embraced that seed,
And it planted itself deep inside me and took root.
I tested that tiny bit of ego-strength against
The negative family messages that focused on
What I was NOT good at, making me feel small
And disconnected.

I was NOT good at being like my mother
Who was all but saintly.

I was NOT good at being
Like my sister who was beautiful and dainty.

I was NOT ballerina thin, nor prissy neat,
But I WAS good at _____

And when I looked a little further, I discovered that
I was GOOD ENOUGH.

Good enough to bear fruit
And reap a harvest.

Good enough to plant a seed
In others and watch them grow
Magnificent and free.

I was GOOD ENOUGH to relate to
The GOD inside of me.

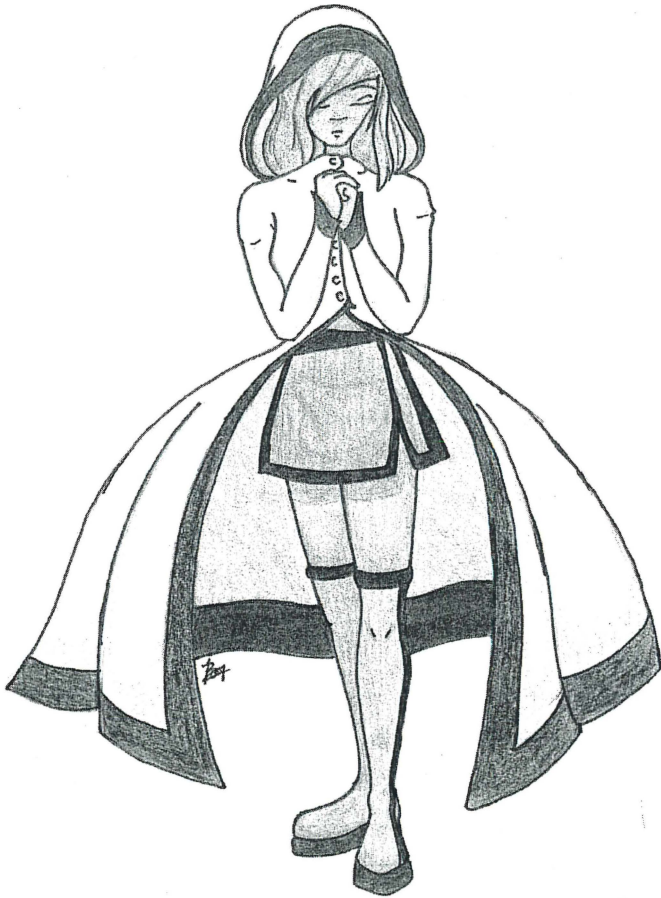
So, this poem is for all my sister-friends
Who don't yet know that
We are better than what our mothers,

Our teachers, the men in our lives,
Or even the good sisters in church have called us.
Because God has called us Blessed
And His is the only voice that matters.
So, here and now, I pray our sister-prayer:
Dear Lord,
Help me to release
The self-doubt
That lives in my heart.

Remind me daily
That I am the product of
Your hands...
And all that
You make...
Is Perfect.

Amen.

Feb



ふたすくす

Translation: Alexis
ALEXIS BAKER

DEATH OF A SUN GODDESS

In the time of legends, when the universe was still young, the elder gods returned to the oblivion from whence they came and left their children, the young gods, to guard all creation from Chaos. Chaos had an insatiable hunger for energy to fuel its destructive powers and devoured everything in its path.

Now, in a secluded spot of the cosmos, there were two young gods set to watch over all life that evolved in their corner of space. They were the twins Purity and Sin. Purity was beautiful in her radiance, and the brightest star in the universe paled beside her. Sin was darker than the darkest night and jealous that all of creation flocked to bask in her warmth.

Chaos sensed Sin's jealousy and nourished it until it became hatred for all living things. Sin began to destroy and taint everything he had once held dear in a fit of blind rage. Purity had noticed her brother's growing angst and tried to comfort him, but he turned on her and a titanic struggle ensued. In a desperate attempt to subdue her sibling, Purity wrapped her essence around Sin and plunged them both into the core of a large star. The star's energy was absorbed by both combatants to fuel their struggle until there was nothing left but a solid mass of rock. The two siblings stayed locked in their prison for millennia, while life began to take hold on the barren shell of a burnt-out star.

Ages past and sentient life had taken hold and prospered, until the young gods awoke again and shook

the earth apart with their renewed struggle. All life on the planet took sides, but the hearts of men are easily swayed by Sin. Purity lacked the strength to continue the fight and thus was sealed away as darkness overwhelmed the land. Midnight mists blotted out the sun like spilt ink upon fine parchment. Rivers ran black and oozing with the blood of the dead, and flowers gave off the putrid stench of decay. Thus, began the first age of shadows.

Parrish Ravelli

ONE NIGHT IN KRAKOW

Last night I met Stanislov,
a bartender.

He cried to me
as he told the story

of his son's baptism
that happened just that morning.

On the radio I heard
that Wednesday's insurgence

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had left more alive
than Tuesday's.

Just down the road
there are rooms filled with shoes,

luggage, eyeglasses
and an incinerator

with stained walls and ceilings.
I sit here and wait

for the road to stop fading
into the horizon

as sunrises are hung over
from yesterday.

Raindrops fall
on my forehead,

and I wonder which direction
they will fall off and gather.

Bobby Dzewulski

MAPMAKER (NOT CARTOGRAPHER)

One man's complete employment now:
the idle sound of offset dreams
that he is sometimes sure
the future will forget to bring.

During these dull times,
fullness declines and visions decay.
In the details of his duties,
he returns to the maps he makes.

72 To what extent and what to include,
what homes on what street,
what roads does the sewer run through?
The connotation of a blank spot he is sure
wears no footprints.

And outline a park, magnify
what the families live like that visit,
what kind of home they occupy?
When will he meet the day that tells him he belongs?

He is sure these people drink coffee
on the leaf-blown back porch
in crisp mornings,
listening to the river run by.

But he knows where the river goes
and where it comes from,
the path created by powerful combination of 3 atoms

to provide morning coffee with a soothing sound
and sight.

But here where it passes the mill,
where it invites and joins other streams,
where the traffic is impossible between 7:00 and 9:00,
he sees the change

from untouched landscape
and bucolic farm,
The river now produces, accepts, aches
and flows from the maps he knows.



Bridge to Enlightenment
SHARON PATTON

Gregory Gray

UNTITLED

Forecast:
a turtle caught
in the rain

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Margaret Mason Tate

LITCHFIELD BEACH, 2006

our last night
together
lying in moon-
light,
embracing the comfort
of quietude, rolling
it around in our mouths
like taffy
savoring its
fragility

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to think that the next
time
we see the moon
it will be from different
continents

the waters around us are
changing
and we with them

shards of blue
glass
beaten against the sand
by the re-
current
tide, smooth
polished
beautiful



Jacob Anderson

Alexis Baker

Ron Bayes

Ashley Bisson

Heather Brett

Bobby Dziejewski

Gregory Gray

Jean Jones

Danny Matthews

Molly McCaffrey

Tasha Mehne

Jackie Dove-Miller

Joe C. Miller

Sharon Patton

Brittany Parrish

Galina Podolsky

Parrish Ravelli

Andrew Reynolds

Marty Silverthorne

Mary EB Smith

Margaret Mason Tate

Justin Thoby

Ryan Thompson

Emily Threlkeld

John Williamson

2008